Vignette 1: The Discovery of the Body

(The stage is a dingy Hollyoaks community center, dressed up with cardboard clocks dangling from strings. Ste Hay, as Hercule Poirot, struts in wearing a charity-shop suit, a fake mustache that's already peeling off, and a Scouse accent trying desperately to sound Belgian. Darren Osborne, playing Sheila Webb the typist, enters in a ill-fitting wig and skirt, looking mortified. Rex Gallagher, as the dead body, lies sprawled on a beanbag "sofa," covered in ketchup for blood.)

Ste (Poirot): Ah, mes amis! Ze little gray cells, zey are tingling like after a bad kebab! I am Hercule Poirot, ze greatest detective in all of... er, Chester! Now, mademoiselle, you are ze typist who found ze body, non?

Darren (Sheila): (fanning himself with a fake typewriter prop) Aye, Mr. Poirot, I was just typin' away when I tripped over this fella. He's deader than me last business venture! Look at all these clocks – one's from me nan's mantelpiece, another's a broken Casio from the market. What a setup!

Ste (Poirot): (twirling his mustache, which falls off; he sticks it back on with spit) Mon dieu! Ze clocks, zey are all set to 4:13! Except zat one, which is flashin' 12:00 like it needs pluggin' in. Zis is no accident. Zere is murder most foul... or at least, most budget!

Rex (Dead Body): (suddenly sitting up, wiping ketchup) Oi, can I move yet? This beanbag's killin' me back. And why am I playin' a corpse? I thought I was the hunky spy!

Darren (Sheila): Rex, you're supposed to be dead! Lie down, ya divvy!

Ste (Poirot): Silence! Ze dead do not speak... unless zey're in Hollyoaks, where everyone comes back from ze grave twice a week. Now, tell me, mademoiselle, did you see anyone suspicious? Like, say, a dodgy landlord or a jealous ex?

Darren (Sheila): Well, there was this blind old bat who owns the house. Miss Pebmarsh. She's probably listenin' in right now with her super-hearin' aids.

(Rex groans and flops back down.)

Ste (Poirot): Ah, ze plot thickens like overcooked Scouse stew! To ze next scene!

(Curtain falls on laughter from the three-person audience.)

Vignette 2: Interrogating Miss Pebmarsh

(Lights up. Rex now plays Miss Pebmarsh, the blind homeowner, with sunglasses and a cane made from a broomstick. Darren switches to Colin Lamb, the detective/secret agent, in a trench coat that's actually a rain mac from Primark. Ste paces dramatically.)

Ste (Poirot): Madame Pebmarsh! You are blind, yet you surround yourself wiz clocks? Zat is like me tryin' to diet in a chippy!

Rex (Pebmarsh): (waving the broomstick wildly, nearly hitting Darren) What? Clocks? I thought they were braille calendars! Who put 'em here? And why do I smell ketchup? Is this a murder or a barbecue?

Darren (Colin): Easy there, Poirot. I'm Colin Lamb, MI5 or whatever – basically, I'm spyin' on spies. This dead bloke might be linked to some Cold War nonsense. Or maybe it's just another Hollyoaks feud over a dodgy pint.

Ste (Poirot): Ze Cold War? In Wilchester? Non, non! Zis is about ze clocks! Zey are symbols of time wasted, like waitin' for a bus in ze rain. Madame, did you hear anything? A scream? A tick-tock? A sneaky fart?

Rex (Pebmarsh): Hear? I heard someone trippin' over me furniture! Sounded like a Scouse lad in heels – wait, that was you, Darren!

Darren (Colin): Oi! It's the wig, innit? Makes me walk funny. Anyway, Poirot, let's check the neighbors. There's that nosy lot next door – the Ramsbottoms or whatever Christie called 'em.

Ste (Poirot): Yes! Ze little gray cells demand it! But first, someone fix my mustache – it's migratin' south!

(Rex accidentally pokes Ste with the cane; chaos ensues as they ad-lib curses.)

Vignette 3: The Nosy Neighbors

(Scene shifts to "next door" – a partition made from old bedsheets. Darren multitasks as Mrs. Hemming, a gossipy neighbor, in a floral dress over his trousers. Rex plays Mr. Bland, another neighbor, with a fake pipe that's actually a kazoo.)

Ste (Poirot): Mesdames et messieurs of Crowdean Crescent! I, Hercule Poirot, demand ze truth! Who among you saw ze murderer?

Darren (Mrs. Hemming): (in a falsetto that's more drag queen than dowager) Oh, Mr. Poirot, it was dreadful! I peeked through me curtains and saw a shadowy figure – looked like he was deliverin' pizza, but with a knife!

Rex (Mr. Bland): (blowing the kazoo like a pipe) Balderdash! I was tendin' me garden gnomes when I heard a thud. Thought it was the postman droppin' another bill. These clocks, though – one's mine! I lent it to Pebmarsh for her "collection." Now it's evidence? Bollocks!

Ste (Poirot): Ah, ze gnomes! Zey are ze silent witnesses. Tell me, monsieur, do zey speak of espionage? Or just of cheap garden centers?

Darren (Mrs. Hemming): Espionage? In this neighborhood? The only spies here are the ones peekin' at each other's bins on rubbish day!

Rex (Mr. Bland): Wait, is this about that dead spy fella? I thought he was just a door-to-door salesman. Sold me a dodgy vacuum once – sucked more than me ex-wife!

Ste (Poirot): Ze little gray cells are whirlpoolin'! Zis is not just murder; it's a conspiracy wiz more twists than a Hollyoaks plotline. Next!

(Darren trips over the bedsheet "wall," pulling it down. Laughter.)

Vignette 4: The Spy Reveal

(Back at the crime scene. Rex now as the villainous Ingram, a spy, lurking in a black hoodie that's clearly from Darren's wardrobe. Darren back as Colin Lamb, "undercover." Ste enters with a magnifying glass made from a bottle bottom.)

Ste (Poirot): Aha! You, monsieur Ingram! You are ze spy who planted ze clocks to confuse ze timeline!

Rex (Ingram): (sneering, but cracking up) Spy? Me? Nah, I'm just here for the free snacks. But yeah, alright, I offed the bloke 'cause he nicked me code – it was hidden in a clock! Tick-tock, boom!

Darren (Colin): Hold up, Poirot! As MI5's finest (or at least, cheapest), I say this is bigger. It's about lavender – wait, no, that's the code word. Or is it clocks? Christie's plots are confusin'!

Ste (Poirot): Non! Ze lavender is a red herring, like Darren's attempts at romance! Ze real clue is ze stopped clock – it points to ze killer's watch bein' cheap Chinese knockoff!

Rex (Ingram): Oi, my watch is legit! Bought it off eBay for a tenner. Fine, I confess! But only 'cause this budget's so low, we ain't got real props.

Darren (Colin): Gotcha! Now, Poirot, wrap it up before the audience nods off.

Ste (Poirot): Ze case is solved! But wait – zere's more twists!

(Rex "escapes" by running offstage, knocking over clocks.)

Vignette 5: The Denouement

(Final gathering. Darren plays multiple neighbors at once, switching hats comically. Rex as Pebmarsh and Ingram simultaneously, confused. Ste center stage, mustache now taped on.)

Ste (Poirot): Gather round, you lot of suspects! Ze murderer is... not who you think! It was ze blind lady – but wait, non! It was ze spy! Or ze typist? Bah, in zis version, it's all of you for bein' rubbish actors!

Darren (Multiple): (as Sheila) What? (switches hat) As Colin: No way! (another hat) As Mrs. Hemming: Scandalous!

Rex (Pebmarsh/Ingram): I'm blind and a spy? That's multitaskin'! But seriously, Ste, your accent's slippin' – sounds more Kirkby than Brussels.

Ste (Poirot): Silence! Ze little gray cells have spoken. Ze clocks were a diversion for... a heist of ze community center biscuit tin! Admit it!

Darren (Colin): Biscuit tin? That's the twist? Agatha'd be spinnin'!

Rex (Ingram): Fine, we did it for the Jammie Dodgers. Hollyoaks budget don't stretch to snacks.

Ste (Poirot): Case closed! Now, bow before ze applause... or ze boos.

(All bow as a single clock falls, bonking Ste. End scene.)

Vignette 6: Backstage Banter

(Offstage, but acted out. The three collapse laughing, props everywhere.)

Ste: Alright, lads, that was shambolic! Me mustache fell off three times!

Darren: And me in a skirt? Never again. But hey, beats runnin' the pub.

Rex: I played a dead body, a blind bat, and a spy. Oscar-worthy, innit?

Ste: Next time, we do somethin' simple – like EastEnders does Shakespeare.

Darren: Nah, this was gold. Irreverent as hell.

Rex: To ze pub!

(They exit arm-in-arm, clocks ticking mockingly.)

Vignette 7: Encore Fumble

(Audience demands more. They improvise.)

Ste (Poirot): One more twist! Ze real killer is... ze director! For makin' us do zis on no budget!

Darren (Sheila): Aye, and ze clocks were nicked from Argos!

Rex (Pebmarsh): Blind justice!

All: Fin!

(Final bow amid props collapsing. Word count: approx. 1520.)